The Miracle of MINDFULNESS

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UNLOCKING' YOUR FULL CREATIVE POTENTIAL

'In the zone'

We often hear sports commentators talking about athletes being 'in the zone'. When an athlete is 'in the zone' it means they have hit a peak where they are performing perfectly and effortlessly. They have gone beyond 'trying', almost as if something else has taken over.

Believe it or not, this 'zone' is the ultimate goal for artists and musicians aswell - to be in full flow - when great creativity arises spontaneously without effort. We have all had moments when this has happened, when it was as if some strange power took over and everything we did was brilliant. Afterwards, we may have even wondered 'Did I really do that?'.

The problem is, it doesn't happen very often, and we soon drift back into our usual routine of '99% perspiration and 1% Inspiration'.

An athlete, artist or musician who finds themself 'in the zone' usually has no idea at all how it happened or how to get the feeling back. People imagine that these experiences are random occurrences that are simply due to years of practise. What they don't realise is that 'the zone' is a state of mind that one can enter at any time. A state of mind where anything you do, from cooking a meal to playing or practicing piano, happens effortlessly.

It is true that practising your craft with absolute devotion may eventually put you in the zone now and then, but you can also learn how to enter this zone directly at will through the practice of Mindfulness Meditation.

Originality is beyond thought

While it helps to study the work of other musicians, there comes a time when you need to create something no one else has thought of. True originality is more than just a reworking of old ideas. True originality is somehow beyond mind, beyond thought.

For instance, if you wanted to create a completely unique tune, what would you do? You couldn't just start playing random notes because it would probably sound meaningless. Nor would you just play old tunes you have learned because that would hardly be original. You would have to be silent for a few seconds and try to 'listen' within yourself until some sort of theme popped into your mind out of that silence. Then you could develop that theme into a tune using your prior knowledge of other tunes.

Obviously it would be of tremendous benefit to any artist if they could tap this inner 'resource' any time they wanted. The practise of moment-to-moment awareness can help you do this.-

A clear head
It also helps to have a certain amount of 'control' over your mind. A person who is overly worried, depressed, anxious, bored or unable to sit quietly, is unlikely to be in the frame of mind required to be musically creative. From experience, when something is bothering me I find it very difficult to focus on even simple tasks. So, just as an athlete needs to keep their body in perfect order, a musician needs to be able to keep their 'head' together.

The practice of awareness
If your mind is always 'somewhere else' you will find it hard to focus it on specific tasks. The practise of moment-to-moment awareness increases your ability to be fully present with whatever it is you have to do whether it be driving your car, dealing with other people or learning to play piano

Most people spend their lives caught up in their thoughts. We eat our breakfast thinking about the problems that may lie ahead. We do our work thinking about whether it will ever be successful or not and this blocks the creative flow. As John Lennon said - 'Life is what happens while we are busy doing other things'. Watch people walking down the street. They have their bodies on automatic pilot while their minds are somewhere else; the kids, the wife, the pay rise, an argument with someone, the yearning for more money, a holiday, what they'll have for dinner. It is no wonder people keep bumping into one another.

We are so used to living in our thoughts in this way it seems perfectly natural. But as long as we constantly dwell on the past or future we miss life as it is here and now and as I said, this greatly affects our ability to be creative because pure creativity needs a certain amount of awareness or alertness in which to arise.

Mindfulness is a way of life
When I tell people that they can use Mindfulness to unlock their full creative potential they imagine that I'm going to teach them how to 'concentrate' more fully on their practice.

While it is true that your ability to concentrate will improve dramatically, Mindfulness is about much more than that.

Mindfulness is also about learning how to 'let go' of fear, inhibitions and obstacles that hold you back and get in your way. Mindfulness 'frees' up your mind, it helps you stay relaxed and focussed, it increases your intuitive capacities. Ideas will flow more easily. You will feel more motivated. Your stamina for practice will increase.

Unlock your potential
This 40 page ebook teaches you how you can easily integrate Mindfulness into your daily life. Like Pianoforall, it is presented in a clear, concise, user-friendly way with hundreds of cartoons that illustrate the text.

The more you practice Mindfulness in ALL your daily life activities the more you will see an improvement in your creative capacities. But don't take my word

What is MINDFULNESS ?

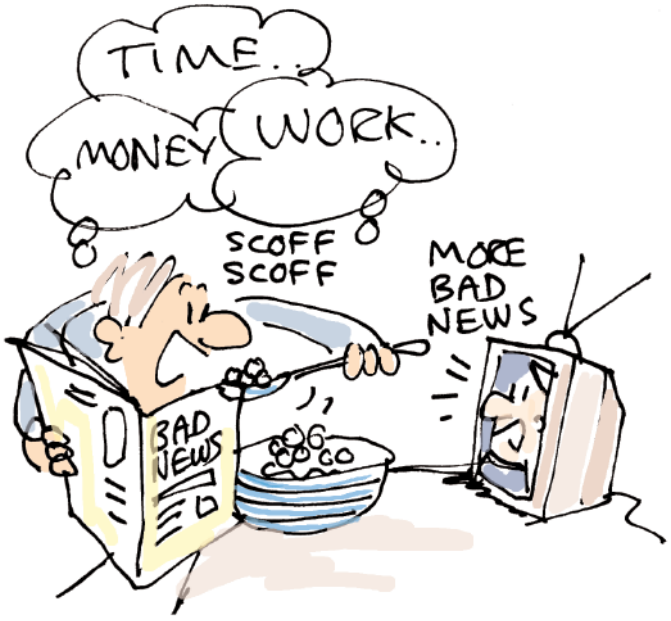
Most people live on *'Auto Pilot'*....

Very often we do things automatically, without noticing what we're doing.

We churn out judgements about ourselves and others.

We try to do ten things at once.

We frequently get so caught up in thoughts and feelings about the **past** or **future** that we get lost in them, disconnecting from what is happening now right in front of us.



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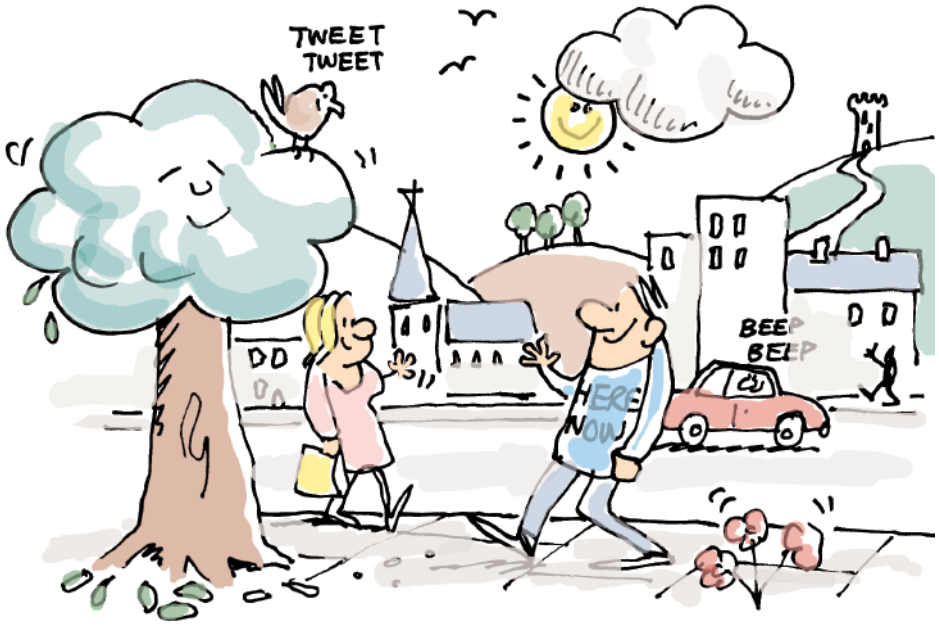
Mindfulness seeks to develop and nourish present moment awareness.

Mindfulness is the practice of..

- Stepping back from being lost in thought
- Bringing your attention fully into the present moment
- Observing whatever arises in awareness with friendly curiosity
- It is non judgmental and accepting of whatever arises be it pleasant or unpleasant

Non judgmental observation leads to..

- Less worry about the past or future
- Less criticism of self and others
- More acceptance of the present moment as it is
- A different way of relating to and coping with sensations, emotions, thoughts and feelings.
- A greater sense of being a part of life



Try it now

A ONE MINUTE exercise in Mindfulness

Read these words very very slowly

Become aware of the act of ‘reading’

there is you the observer and the page or screen with words

and your mind making sense of it all

Become aware of your body now AS you read the words

and that you are sitting in an environment

as you read these words open yourself to the entire present moment

breath gently - become aware of your stomach rise and fall

feel the weight of your body on the chair

Listen to sounds in the background - even the silence

Feel the ‘space’ in the room

Become aware of light and shade, colours, textures

Feel it all happening NOW

Even if you are thinking about past or future realise that that thinking is happening NOW

After you read this exercise stay in the moment for a while

Wait, just be with whatever is happening right now

Don’t judge any of it - just experience it - be open to it..

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Notice..

When you are so extremely concentrated in the present moment it is harder to worry about the past or the future.

You can also see from being so mindful that this is NOT how you usually experience life.

It makes you wonder where our minds are most of the time

Practice this one minute exercise as often as you can remember to do it.

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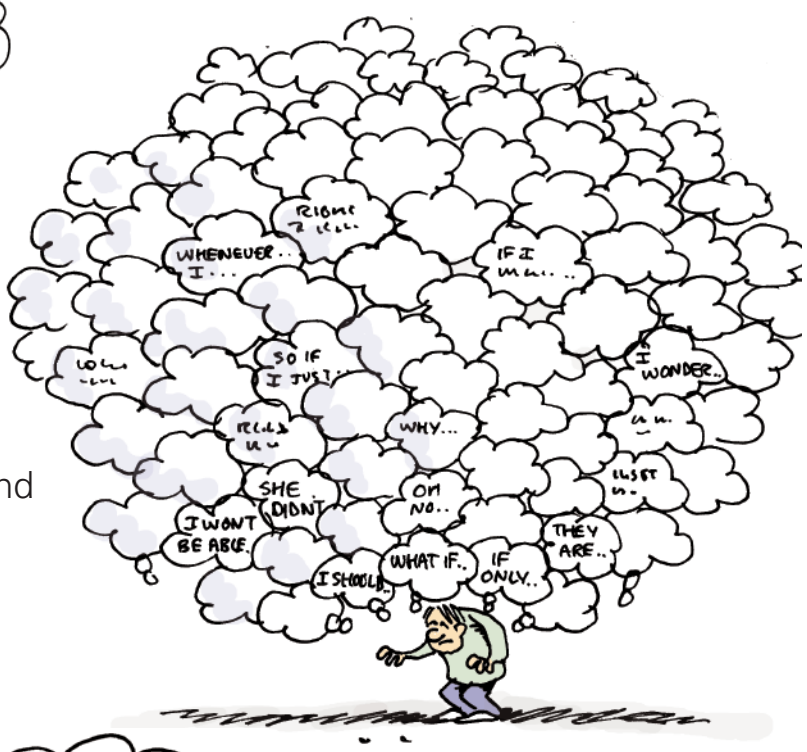
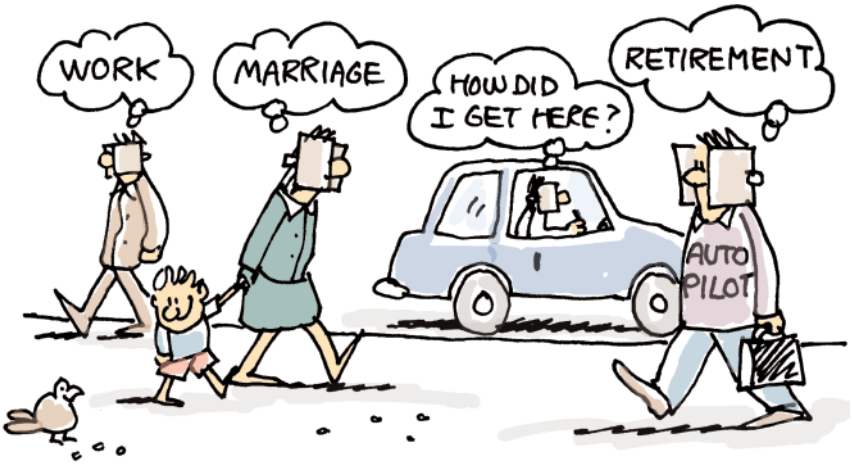
Why Mindfulness is so important

The mind is an amazing tool but if we are unable to switch it off, it can overwhelm us..



It is estimated that the average person thinks around 60,000 thoughts every day!



Few people live in the moment, we very often dwell on the past or imagine what good or bad the future will hold..

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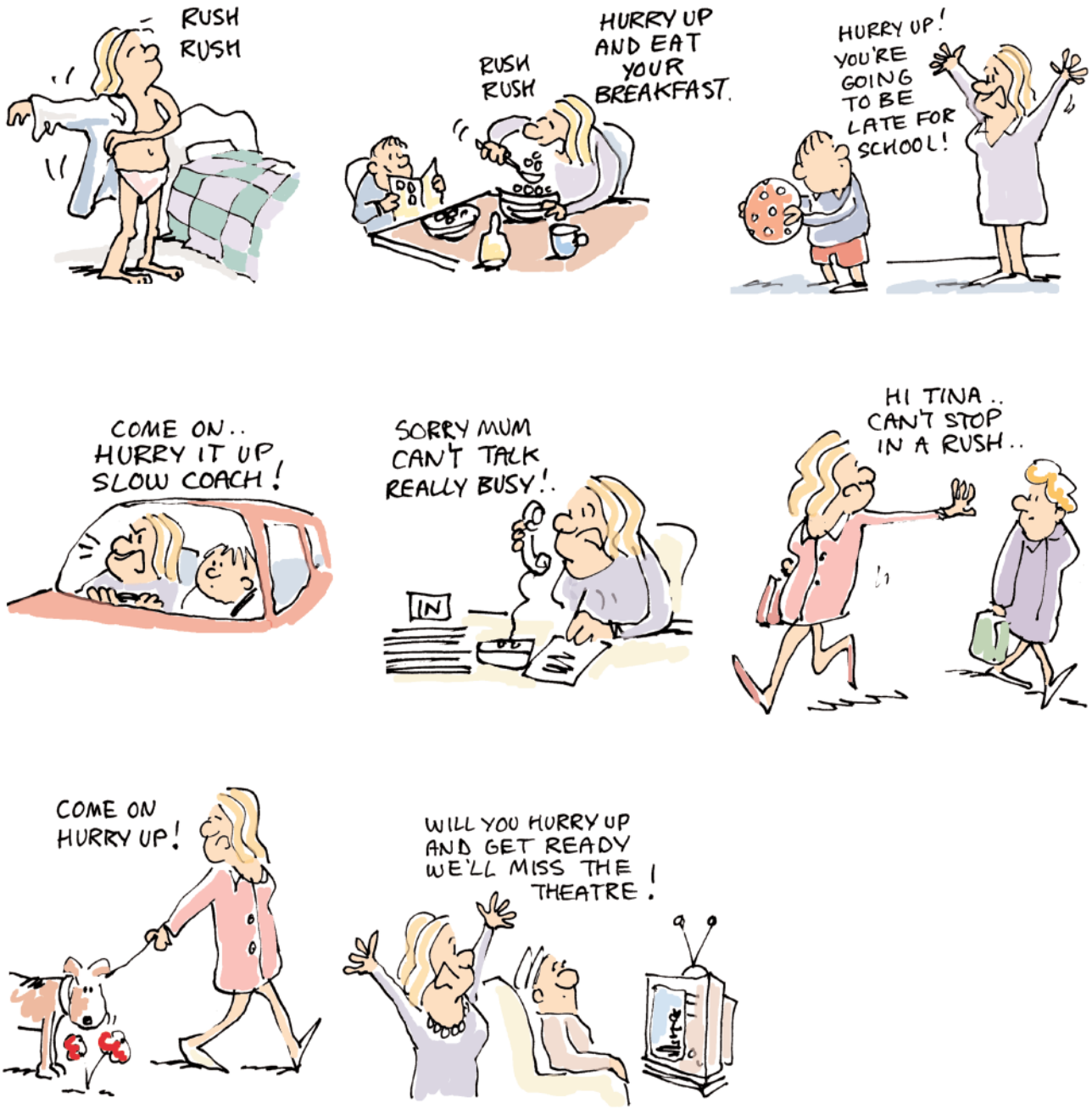
Why Mindfulness is so important

Thoughts can be with us from morning to night without a break

Oh no.. it feels like I only went to bed,
I wonder why Sue didn't phone me last night?
I better ring that travel agent and book that flight.
If Terry doesn't help me out today I'm going to say something
I wonder if Sue is really the right girl for me.
IN
Roll on summer, maybe I could move to Spain and live in a villa
I hope Sue hasn't fallen out with me
I wonder should I get that new 48 inch widescreen TV?.
Sue and I used to talk a lot more, I wonder if we're running out of things to say...
Well at least I survived another day.

Why Mindfulness is so important

Sometimes we can be in such a hurry
we hardly have time for life at all..



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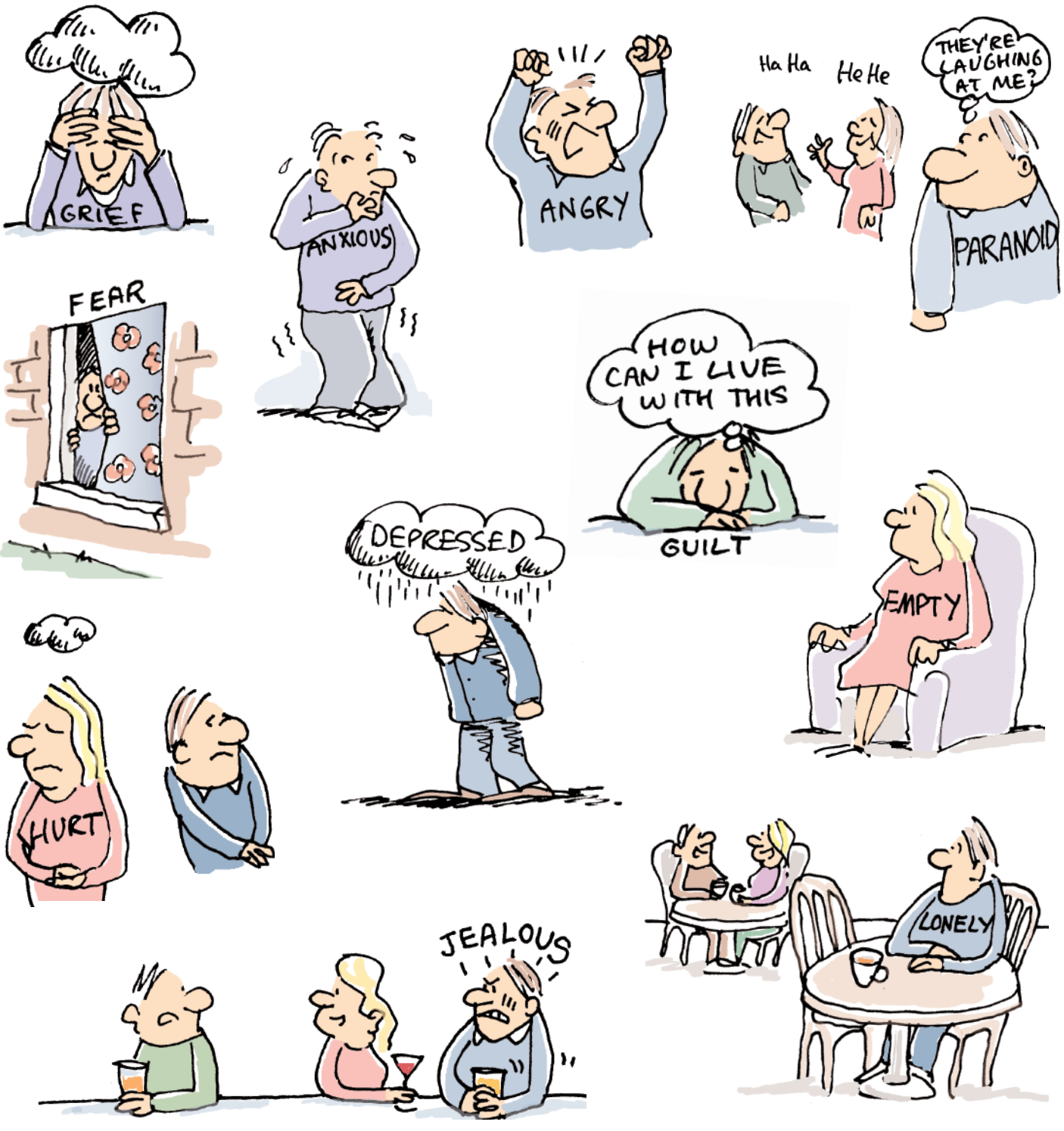
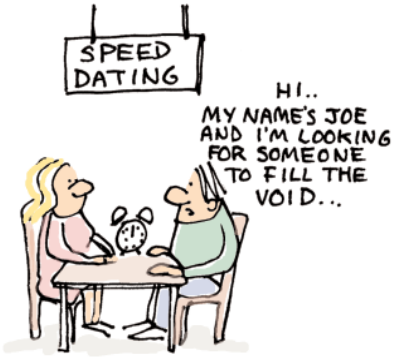
Why Mindfulness is so important

Painful thoughts, feelings and emotions about the past and future can overwhelm us too..



Why Mindfulness is so important

These thoughts and feelings can be so distressing we often understandably try to block them out, avoid them or cope with them in whatever way we can..



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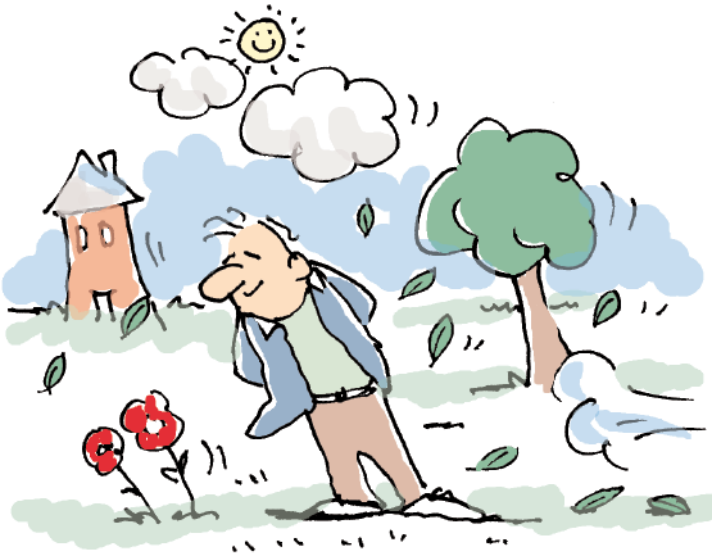
Mindfulness can help to change all this.



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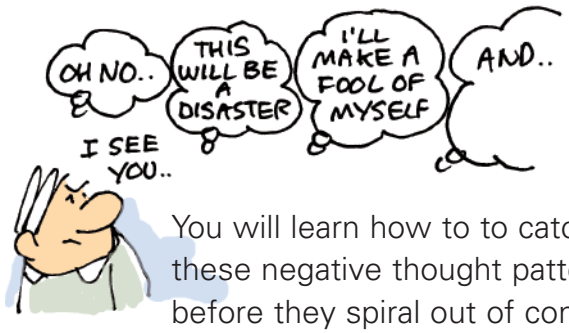
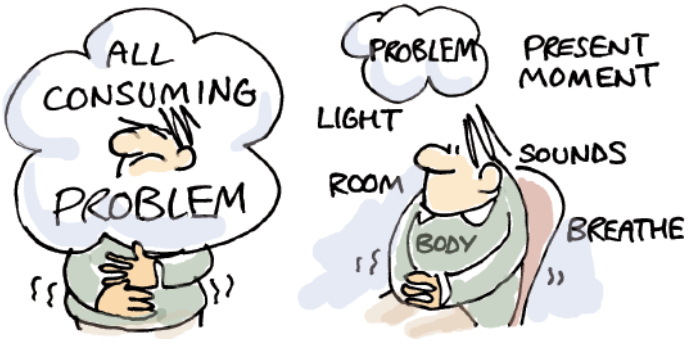
How Mindfulness Helps..

You learn first hand how much the mind wanders, how it continuously shifts from one topic to another and how this mind wandering can allow negative thoughts and feelings to increase.



You will learn how to to catch these negative thought patterns before they spiral out of control..

You then learn how to bring the mind back to the present moment



MIndfulness gives you a break from the intensity of distressing thoughts and emotions because you see that they are only PART of our ACTUAL present moment experience.

As you gain some distance from the intensity of a problem - solutions are much easier to arrive at.

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How Mindfulness Helps..

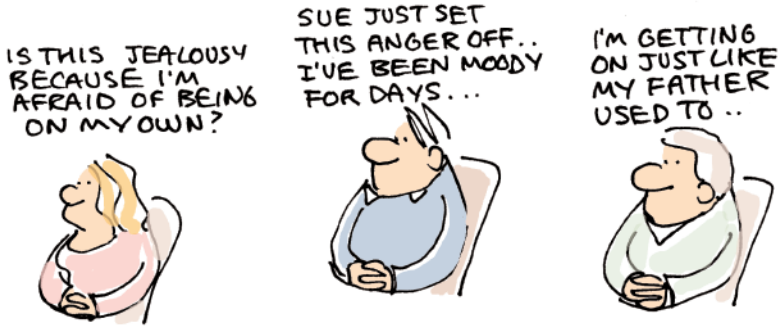
Mindfulness will alert you to any negative cycles that may be maintaining a problem

Mindfulness allows you to process emotions in a managable and non - destructive way

You get to learn that your thoughts don't have to 'define' you.

You will feel more at peace in your own company - therefore...

- Less need for distraction
- Less fear of isolation
- Less fear of rejection
- Less fear of abandonment
- Less dependence on others
- Less feelings of jealousy


IS THIS JEALOUSY BECAUSE I'M AFRAID OF BEING ON MY OWN?
SUE JUST SET THIS ANGER OFF.. I'VE BEEN MOODY FOR DAYS...
I'M GETTING ON JUST LIKE MY FATHER USED TO ..

Sitting Mindfully with thoughts and feelings often clarifies any underlying deeper fears or beliefs.

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How Mindfulness Helps..

You will relate better to other people and will have a greater capacity to listen

You will no longer allow problems to fester for long

Criticism is taken on board but much less 'personally'

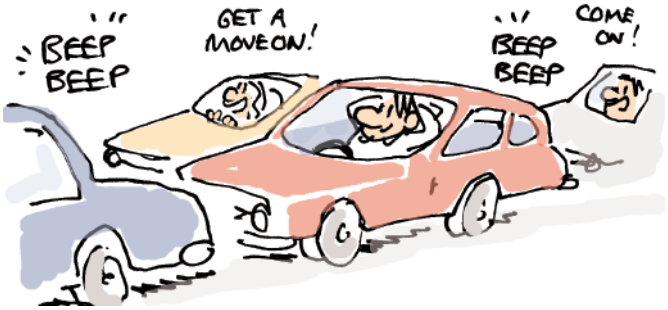
Non judgemental self observation leads to greater empathy towards others

Your health will improve

- Blood pressure normalised
- Heart rate lowered
- Cardiovascular effectivity increased
- Enhanced immune system
- Reduced stress and anxiety
- Improved sleep and concentration
- Stomach and Bowel function improves
- Pain is easier to cope with
- Aging process decreased

With less distraction from your mind, your concentration improves and your work becomes easier and more enjoyable

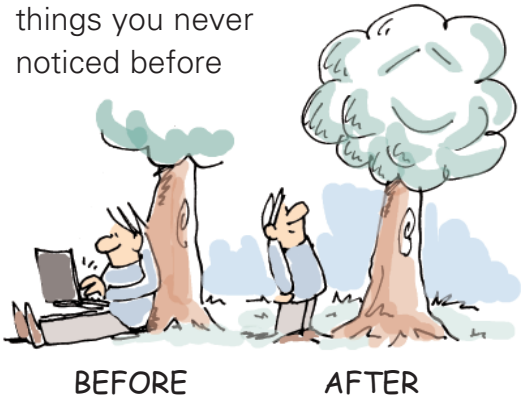
How Mindfulness Helps..



Situations that previously caused a great deal of irritation become easier to deal with

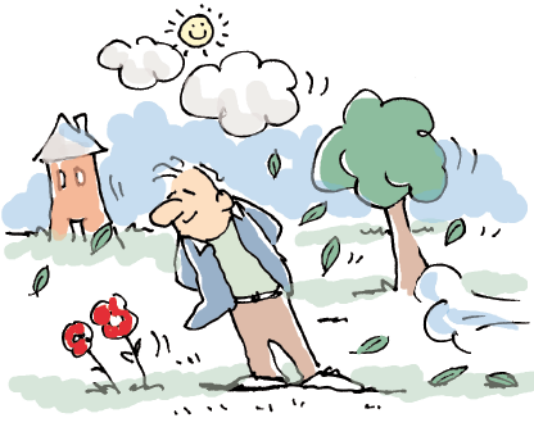
You will realise that you can never REALLY be bored..

You will notice things you never noticed before



Your creative and intuitive capacities will improve dramatically.

You will simply feel HAPPIER for absolutely no reason whatsoever!..



You will feel a greater sense of connectedness to life as a whole

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Mindfulness in PRACTICE

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Mindfulness in practice

First lets look at what Mindfulness is NOT!

Mindfulness is **NOT**..

- Avoidance of or distraction away from unpleasant experiences
- Supression of inner emotional feelings or outward behaviour
- Blanking the mind
- An attempt to be in a 'positive' rather than 'negative' state

and mindfulness is **NOT** just 'Concentration'

With concentration we focus in one one thing at a time.

Mindfulness is being OPEN to the entirety of the present moment experience.

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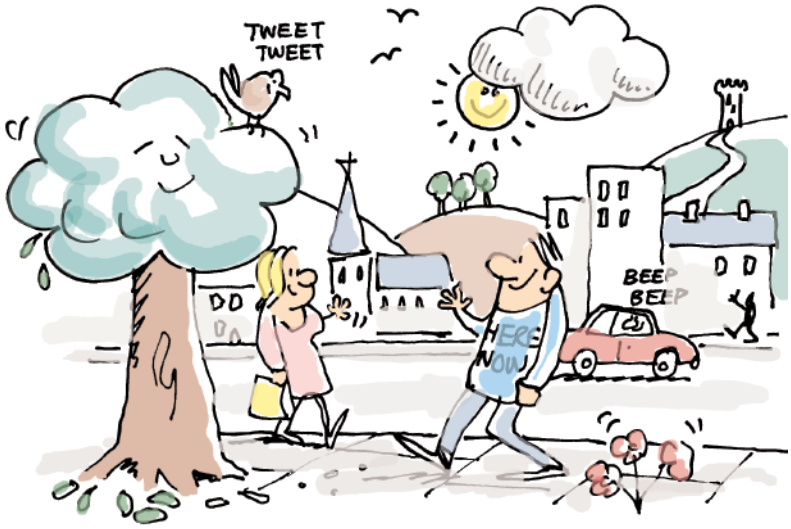
Mindfulness in practice

There are two forms of practice

1. Informal practice - Mindfulness in Everyday Life

Bringing Mindfulness into your daily life activities,
work, home, relationships, etc



2. Formal practice - 'Sitting' with Mindfulness

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Mindfulness in Everyday Life

You can practice Mindfulness *'anytime, anyplace, anywhere'*. Try not to see it as something to 'add' to your life like learning the Piano. Living Mindfully means being more aware of being ***alive.***

The basic premise

When engaged in any activity try to bring as much present moment awareness to the experience as you can

- Be aware of yourself being 'lost in thought' and disconnected from your experience.
- STOP - LOOK - LISTEN & BE HERE NOW (The Mindfulness code)
- Be open to as much of your actual present moment experience as you can
- Be present WITH the experience - BE ALIVE
- Come 'back to your senses' notice sights, smells, sounds, tastes and touch
- Try to directly EXPERIENCE rather than judge or manipulate everything
- Acknowledge any unpleasant thoughts or feelings but again try not to judge them as 'good' or 'bad' - imagine you are experiencing them from slightly outside yourself.
- Slow down to the speed of life

Mindfulness in Everyday Life

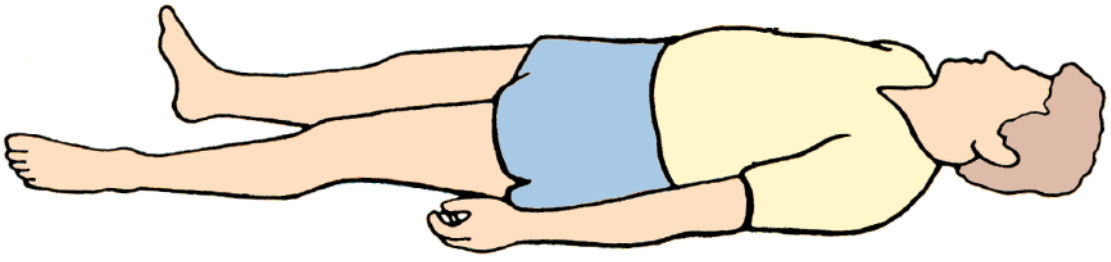
Preliminary Exercise - THE BODY SCAN

Most people are completely out of touch with their body. We live so much in our 'heads' we rarely even notice the body (apart from judging it by it's cover!) unless something goes wrong with it.

Bringing your awareness into the body reconnects you not only with yourself but with your environment in which your body exists. This in turn helps to bring your mind back into the present moment.

Practice mindfulness of body any time you remember. If you find yourself getting 'carried away' in thinking or talking bring your attention into your body and you will feel calmer and more in control.

You aren't trying to relax your body (though that might happen). The object is to strengthen your ability to be mindful and to get more in touch with your body.



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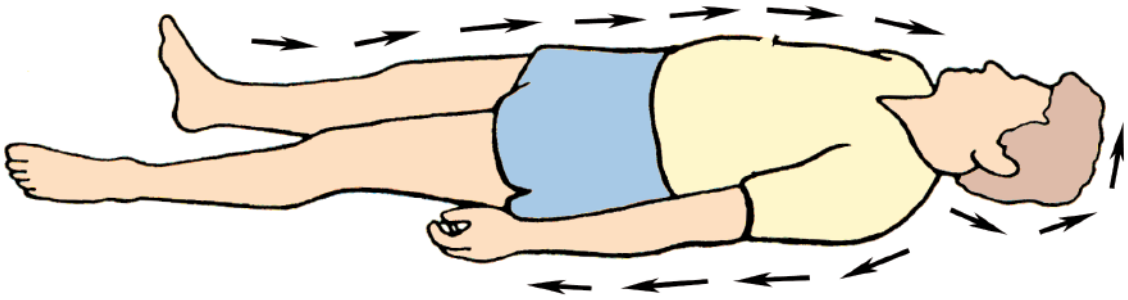
THE BODY SCAN EXERCISE

- Sit comfortably or lie flat on your back with your arms by your sides.
- Take a deep breath. Let it out slowly. Let go all over
- Feel your body first of all as one unit all over
- Observe what is happening in the body? Feel any sensations or tension.
- Feel the weight of your body and the contact with the chair or floor
- Scan slowly through the body beginning with your feet, moving up to your ankles, calves, thighs, midriff, stomach, back, chest, shoulders, down your arms into your fingers and then up to your neck, throat, head, face, and scalp. Explore each area of your body at whatever speed feels comfortable.
- Then feel your body as a single unit again

  If your mind settles rest in the stillness



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Mindfulness in Everyday Life

Exercise 2. Begin the day MINDFULLY

(Set your alarm clock ten minutes early)

Most people start thinking or problem solving as soon as they open their eyes in the morning. The earlier in the day you practice Mindfulness the more likely you will be able to maintain it throughout the day. Your life is happening NOW - try not to miss it!

Catch thoughts drawing you in..

STOP
LOOK
LISTEN
and
BE HERE
NOW

Be open to the whole present moment

Be aware of
your body
the room
sounds
temperature
silence / noise

Wait until you feel anchored in the present moment even if only for a second

Try to maintain the sense of 'being here now' as you start the day. Be present with each experience

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Mindfulness in Everyday Life

Exercise 3. Mindful Walking

'Mindless' Walking

This is the way most people walk around. It's amazing we don't bump into one another.

How much of our ACTUAL life do we miss?

Mindful Walking

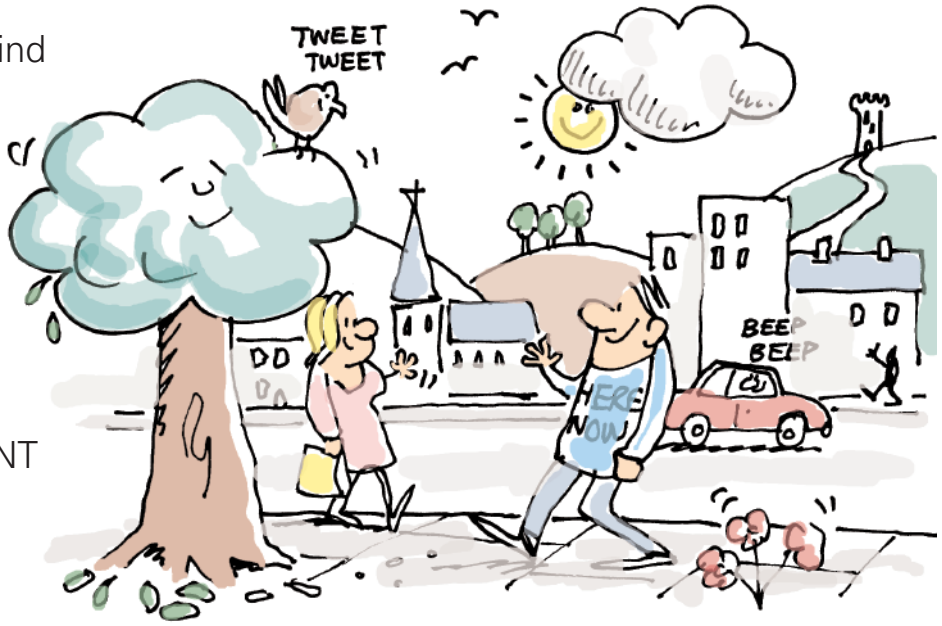
First of all be aware if you are walking around lost in thought like the chap above. Then remember ***The Mindfulness Code***..

STOP - being lost in your mind

LOOK - at life all around you, happening right now.

LISTEN - to all the sounds that life is creating.

BE HERE NOW - be PRESENT with the experience of walking - this moment won't come again!



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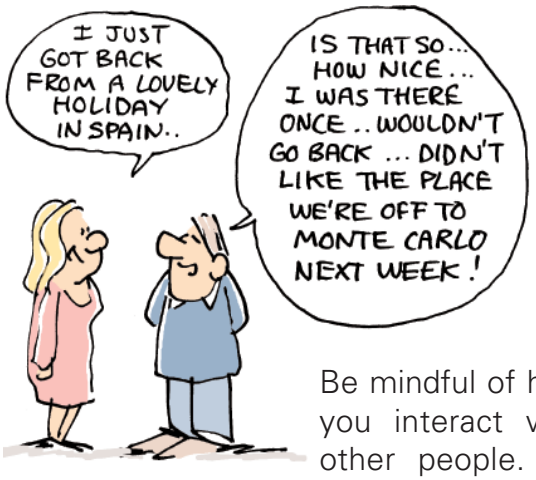
Mindfulness in Everyday Life

Exercise 4. Mindfulness in Daily Activities

Eating is a great time to practice Mindfulness. Notice how 'automated' this activity has become - how you have barely finished one mouthful before you are shoving another one in. Does thinking, talking or watching TV take over at mealtimes? Enjoy eating for a change.


I JUST GOT BACK FROM A LOVELY HOLIDAY IN SPAIN..
IS THAT SO... HOW NICE... I WAS THERE ONCE.. WOULDN'T GO BACK ... DIDN'T LIKE THE PLACE WE'RE OFF TO MONTE CARLO NEXT WEEK!

Be mindful of how you interact with other people. Do you really listen or are you just waiting to say your piece? Observe how much of your time is spent making judgments about others or how much time is spent worrying about how others see you.

Bring Mindfulness to tasks you normally see as menial or boring. Washing dishes, vacuuming, etc. Each moment in life is what we make of it

Driving is another wonderful opportunity to practice Mindfulness. Switch off the Radio for a change. Bring your attention to the experience of driving. Feel the car moving along the road.

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SITTING
Mindfulness
PRACTICE

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Sitting Mindfulness Practice

(find somewhere quiet if possible)
JUST SIT
BACK STRAIGHT / EYES OPEN (but relaxed)
BE OPEN TO THE ENTIRE PRESENT MOMENT
WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

GENTLY be aware of / open to
Body / Breathing
Environment / sounds / objects
colours / shapes / textures
The space around you
Imagine life beyond the room

Allow any thoughts or feelings to be as they are
Notice how thoughts come and go.
Rather than judge emotions mentally -
experience how they feel physically in the here and now
just observe without judgements of 'good' or 'bad'

If you get lost in thought
GENTLY return to the here and now
See the thoughts as part of that experience
Don't try to get rid of them or change them

Stay open to the entirety of your present moment experience
for as long as you can

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Sitting Mindfulness Practice

What is the 'goal' of Sitting Mindfulness

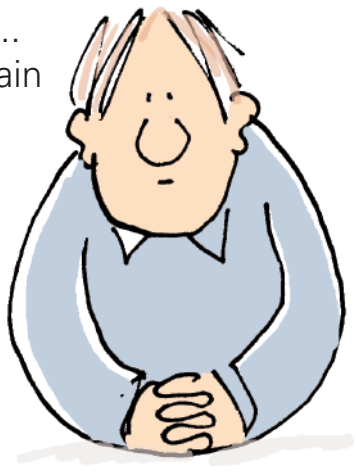
Nearly everyone thinks the goal of Mindfulness is to be very calm and peaceful but that is 'relaxation' not mindfulness.

Sitting in Mindfulness is a practice that helps you deal with life ***beyond*** the practice.

If you have a stressful day - if you are stuck in a huge traffic jam - if you are arguing with your boss or partner and so on, it helps to have an effective way to reduce your conditioned, automatic unhelpful responses to these situations

Sitting Mindfully builds your tolerance, acceptance and compassion muscles.

When you sit it's NOT about being CALM
It's about getting better at stepping back, accepting and letting go of old automated, reactive, conditioned reactions to life.



So when the mind wanders you GENTLY bring it back..
When it wanders again - you GENTLY bring it back again

You don't judge yourself if your mind wanders -
You just observe

You aren't trying to have a blank mind

The whole point is to simply practice being aware of whatever arises without HAVING to react in automatic condition ways.

Sitting Mindfulness Practice

It's like being at the gym

You don't go to the gym to lie down and relax - you go to the gym to build stamina so that you feel more capable in your life.

Sitting Mindfully is the same - each time you bring the wandering mind back , each time you face and accept agitation, irritation or boredom you increase your capacity to deal with these things in your daily life.

Mindfulness CAN lead to a greater sense of peace but if you try to be peaceful each time you may be very disappointed!

The mind never stops and that's ok. It doesn't HAVE to stop.
It's how we RESPOND to the mind that causes problems.

If we gently observe thoughts coming and going in all their craziness we will eventually be less controlled by them.

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Sitting Mindfulness Practice

Some things that may happen..

• You may get bored or restless

Use boredom as a practice. Consider why your mind feels compelled to be entertained all the time. How does this affect your life? Think how useful it would be to feel content in your own company without the need for distractions. Boredom can be very interesting if you explore it for a while

• You may have strange thoughts or sensations

This can happen sometimes - the mind is not used to sitting in this way. If you feel overly uneasy, stretch, readjust and try again. If the feelings persist, give up and try later. Don't turn it into an endurance test.

• You will try to manipulate your experience

Everyone has their own idea of what mindfulness is all about. Some try desperately to be relaxed or blank their mind or slow down their breathing. Some try to get rid of any unpleasant thoughts or feelings. The list is endless. These things are not 'bad' but they aren't Mindfulness - just observe the subtle manipulation.

• You will try to achieve something..

It's hard to break a life long habit! For instance, you will TRY to be very calm, you will TRY to be good at Mindfulness, you may be waiting for something to 'happen'. Just observe this.

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Sitting Mindfulness Practice

Some things that may happen..

• You might think it is all a waste of time

Sitting doing nothing does not seem very 'practical'.
Just try it for a while and see what happens.
Mindfulness practice has a cumulative effect. The more you practice, the more you will notice change in your life

• You will wonder are you 'doing' it right

Don't 'DO' anything - just BE.

• Your thoughts will reach mania level!

See the next few pages..

• You may feel GREAT!

That's a nice bonus - just don't turn that into a goal each time.

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What if thoughts get out of control?..

When we try to sit without distractions our mind feels a great need to fill the void with endless chatter..

I WONDER AM I DOING THIS RIGHT?..
SUE NEVER PHONES ME!
DON'T FORGET TO VACUUM THE HALL
THOUGHTS BE GONE!
I SHOULD HAVE TOLD HIM TO GO JUMP IN THE LAKE..
CLEAR YOUR MIND!
WHAT IF
I WONDER IF THAT SALE IS STILL ON?
THIS IS DRIVING ME NUTS..
I MUST BLANK MY MIND!
I NEED TO DEFROST THE TURKEY..
I'VE GOT TO STOP THINKING!
I'D LOVE A CUP OF TEA..

And the more we try to stop the thoughts or 'blank the mind' the more they grow and grow..

So what CAN we do about thoughts?..

We're going to look at
several ways in which you can help
to settle the endless chatter of your mind

1. See thoughts AS thoughts

2. Let thoughts BE

(The 'Don't Think Of A Red Rose' Trick)

3. Using an 'Anchor'

4. Give thoughts an overall 'label'

5. Negotiate with the mind

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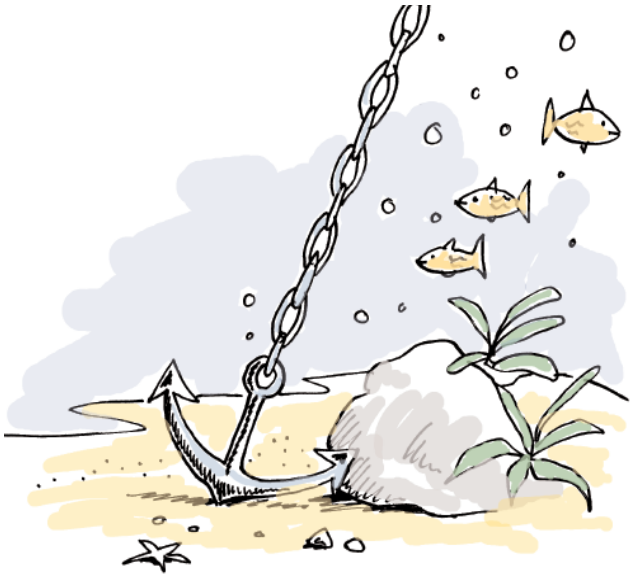
Dealing with Thoughts

Using an ANCHOR..

Sometimes the mind pulls you about so much it is helpful to 'anchor' it to some point of reference. This stops it getting lost in endless distraction.

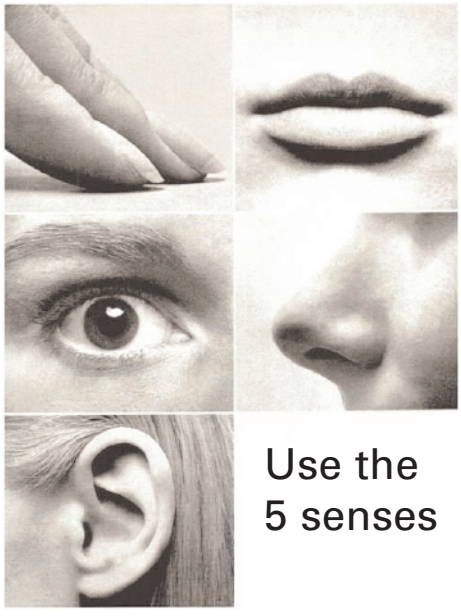


Anchor 1 - Your immediate environment

When we are lost in thought we block everything else out of our awareness.

Get 'out of your mind' and 'back to your senses'.
SEE life around you;
feel the TOUCH of your body in your clothes or your weight on the chair or your feet on the ground; HEAR any sounds;
SMELL the air.
When your mind draws you in GENTLY come back into the life all around you.

Allow thoughts to be PART of that experience.



Use the 5 senses

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Dealing with Thoughts

Anchor 2 - Following the breath

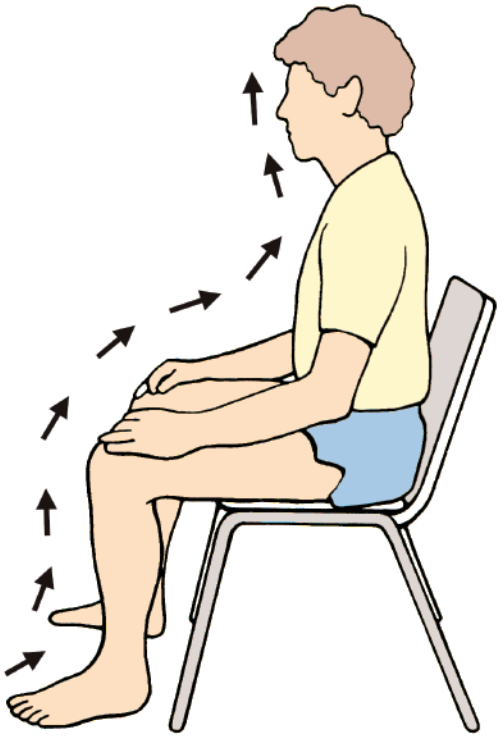
Bring your attention to your stomach.
Observe it rise and fall with each breath.
You are going to bring your attention to each out-breath

If the mind wanders, notice what it was that took you away and then GENTLY bring your attention back to the breath.

If you find the mind has settled, ease back from the breath and open up to full present moment awareness.

Anchor 3 - The Body Scan

Scan slowly through the body beginning with your feet, moving up to your legs, stomach, back, chest, shoulders, down your arms, into your fingers and then up to your neck, throat, head, face and scalp.



Then feel your body as a single unit. If you find the mind has settled, open up to the full present moment awareness.

You aren't trying to relax or manipulate the body in any way - just bring awareness to each part. Do this at whatever speed you wish.

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Dealing with Thoughts

See thoughts AS thoughts

We have a tendency to 'think' that thoughts are 'who we are'. "I think therefore I am". This is one reason we get so caught up in them.

Try seeing your thoughts AS thoughts. Observe them coming and going (don't judge them 'good' or 'bad' just observe).

Imagine them drifting in and out like clouds.
Notice how they build up or change direction or drift from one topic to another.

Be aware of the gap (silence) BETWEEN each thought.

And then just let them be.

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Dealing with Thoughts

Let thoughts BE - just as they are..

If I asked you to try really hard NOT to think about a red rose you would find it difficult because in order NOT to think about it you have to bring it to your mind - it's a TRAP..

If I then asked you to think of nothing else BUT the red rose you would find that equally as difficult because your mind would soon wonder to something else - our minds become distracted very easily when we want to hold onto something.

Use this trick in your mindfulness practice..

The more you try NOT to think so many thoughts the more you think them but if you ALLOW yourself to think as many thoughts as you wish and even willingly OBSERVE them coming and going they tend to fade into the background.

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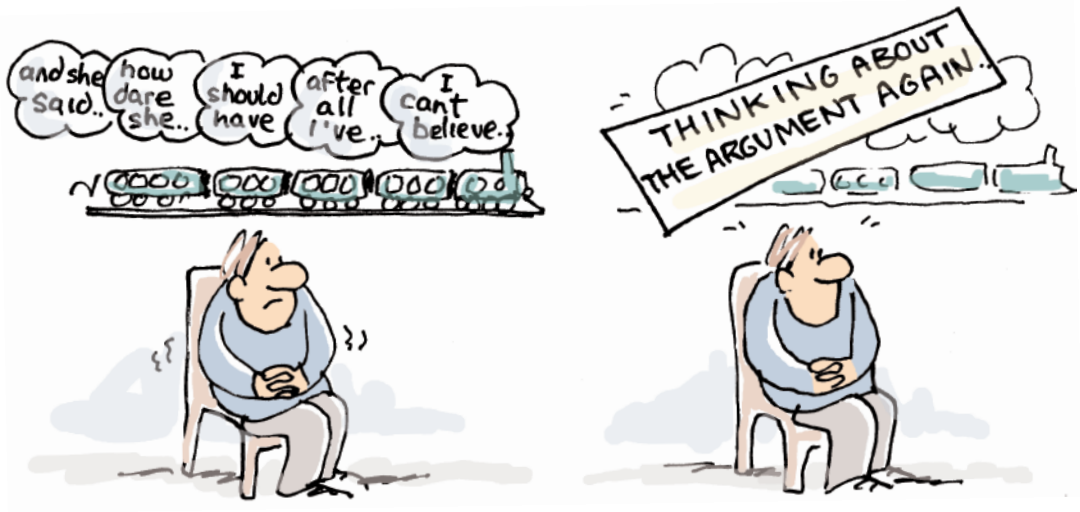
Dealing with Thoughts

Labelling the thoughts

Instead of getting involved in the 'details' of a train of thought - give it an overall 'label' - for instance - "thinking about *the argument* again" - this wakens you up and stops you from getting pulled in.



Negotiate with the mind

Try negotiating with your mind if it INSISTS on thinking, planning or figuring something out.

Tell yourself that you will be able to resume thinking in ten minutes time and that this period of mindfulness will help you think in a far more effective and purposeful way.

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What about overwhelming FEELINGS & EMOTIONS?

Alongside distressing thoughts we can also feel incredible fear of the physical sensations.

The knot in our stomach, the nausea, the tightness in our head, the black cloud we feel in times of sadness or regret.

We may be clenching our fist after an argument or just feel an overall sense of weariness or fatique.

It is at this point where many people turn to outside means in an attempt to avoid the feelings or block them out.

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What about overwhelming FEELINGS & EMOTIONS?

Emotions become more overwhelming when we extend them into the past or future. -

"Why did this have to happen" - "If only she had told me.." - "This pain will NEVER go away" - "Things will NEVER be the same again" and so on.

Each time we think in this way we increase our distress because we feel overwhelmed by the vastness of time.

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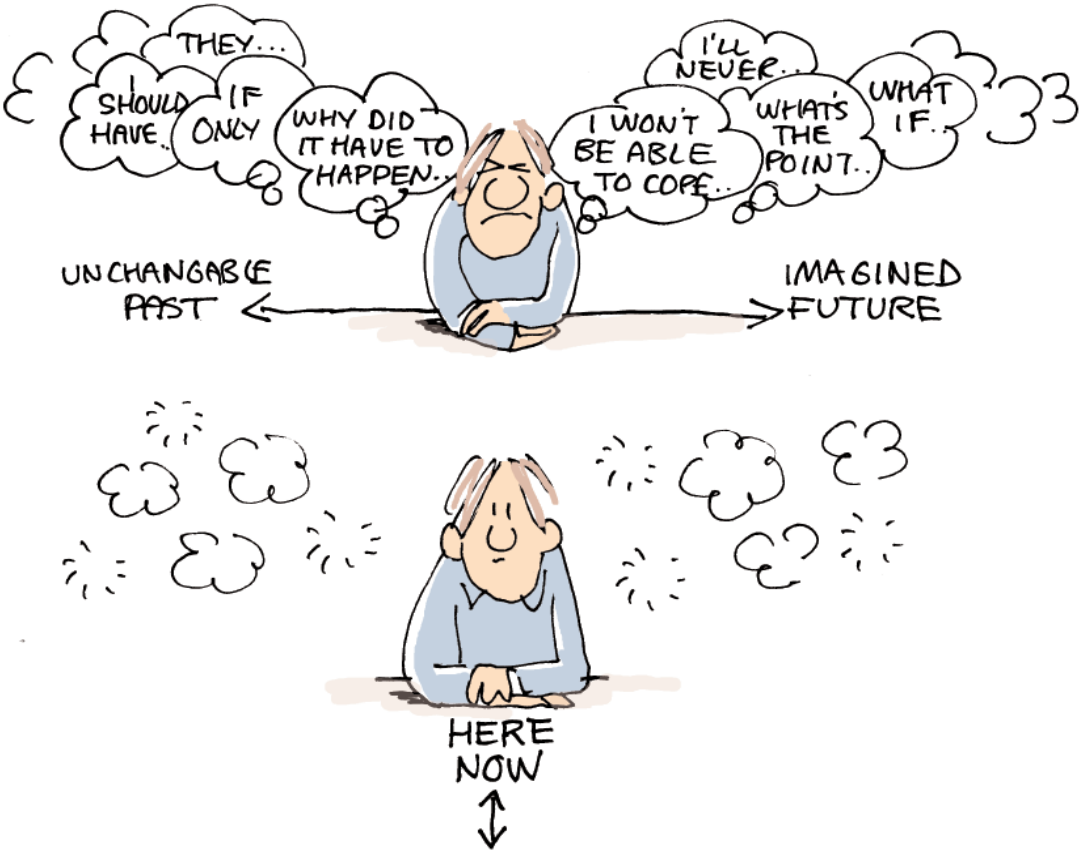
What about overwhelming FEELINGS & EMOTIONS?

We may not realise that a lot of our thoughts are related to the fear of these physical symptoms and when we sit Mindfully in a SPECIFIC way (see next page) with these feelings we discover that we CAN actually cope with them.

Mindfulness practice helps us see that actually we only need to deal with one moment at a time.



This helps to bring our distress down and in the long term we have less fear of lifes problems because we know we have an incredibly powerful coping mechanism.

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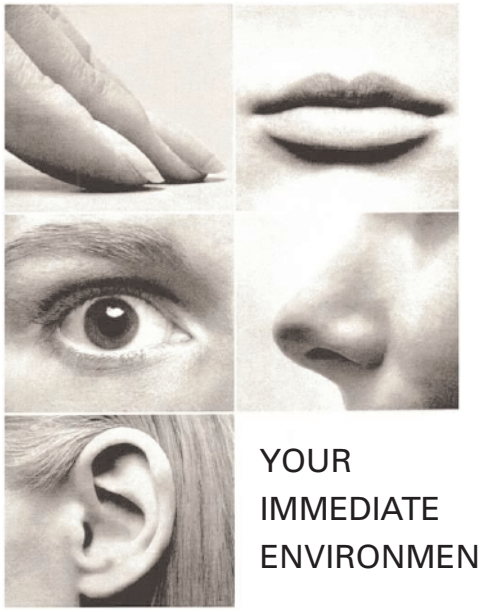
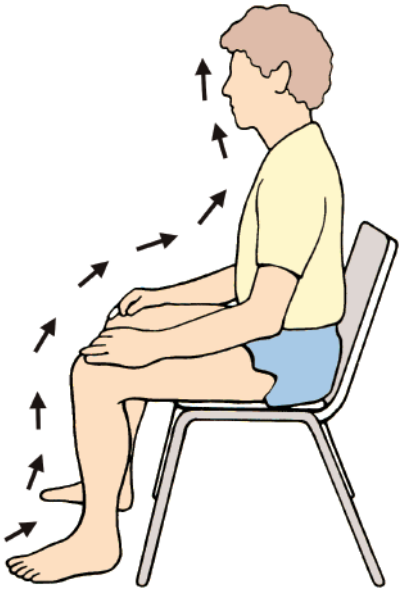
Sitting Mindfully With Emotions

1. Use one of the anchors to first of all reduce the intensity of the feelings enough that you will be able to face them.



YOUR IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT

Following the BREATH



The BODY SCAN

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Sitting Mindfully With Emotions

2. Feel where the emotion (the anger, grief, sadness etc) is in the body. Feel it as a purely PHYSICAL sensation. Try to withhold any judgements that involve the past or future such as "this SHOULDN'T have happened" or "I WON'T be able to cope".

Just bring it right back to this exact moment you are in. What does it feel like physically here and now. Treat it as if it is a scientific investigation.

- Where in your body are the feelings located? Stomach / shoulders / head / back / chest?
- Do they have a center point? How far do they extend?
- Are they dull / sharp / hot / cold / large / small?
- Do they have a colour / a shape?
- Do the feelings move about, are they like a cloud hovering around?
- If you feel nothing at all is it because you feel ok or do you feel 'numb'

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Sitting Mindfully With Emotions

3. If the intensity of the feelings diminish as a result of this practice open your awareness to the full present moment.

Sit Mindfully in this way for as long as you can. If your mind drifts into past or future GENTLY return to the present moment in whatever way you can.

You need only sit for a few minutes at a time but repeat the process whenever needed.

By doing this you are FACING the emotions in a controlled and gradual way. This practice lets you see you that you have a greater capacity to cope with emotions than you might have imagined - as long as you translate them into ACTUAL present moment physical feelings.

BE CAREFUL - Don't make the mistake of thinking that 'sitting with the emotions' means you are to sit and focus on the endless past and future THOUGHTS about the emotions - that results in increased anxiety.

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Frequently Asked Questions

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FAQ's

When should I practice sitting Mindfulness and how long should I sit?

Three times a day if you can and for no longer than ten or fifteen minutes. Only extend this time if you instinctively 'feel' it would be beneficial

Is this not just avoiding reality and problems?

On the contrary. Mindfulness is DIRECT contact with reality. It is the ultimate exposure to feelings and thoughts that cause so many of our problems.

So mindfulness doesn't really solve problems it just makes you feel calmer about them?

In one way, the aim of Mindfulness is not to manipluate your experience but that doesn't mean it won't lead to CHANGES in your life. For instance, if, through mindfulness, you see clearly that your avoidant behaviour is maintaining certain problems you are far more likely to change that.

Is mindfulness a safe practice for anyone?

For nearly all people Mindfulness is useful or at least not harmful. However, people that suffer from schizophrenia or other serious mental diseases should be careful. If a person with a serious mental illness practiced mindfulness in a certain way - for instance with their eyes closed or for hours at a time - they might get further caught up in destructive thinking patterns. Anyone who has a serious mental illness should only practice under strict supervision or at least make sure they stick to the guidelines laid down in this booklet.

What if the 'present moment' is horrible for me, why would I want to be more aware of it?

To begin with, although avoidance can bring temporary relief it usually stores up more trouble in the long run because we never learn how to cope with our feelings.

But it also very important to remember that sitting Mindfully in the present moment does NOT mean that we should focus MORE on distressing thoughts or feelings.

Thoughts become more distressing if we take them into the past or future. We can then be consumed by regret or fear. To stay in the present moment gives us much less to have to deal with. We also see that our thoughts and feelings are only a PART of our actual overall experience.

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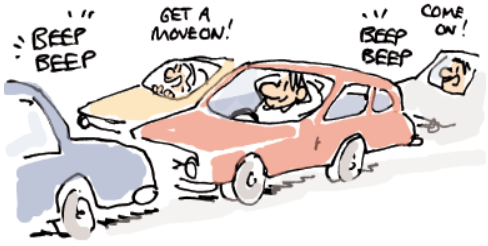
A 4 Stage Mindfulness Schedule

Each day .. attempt some or all of the following..

1. ***Begin the day*** Mindfully

2. Practise ***One Minute Mindfulness***
'anytime, anyplace, anywhere'

3. Bring Mindfulness into your ***daily activities***



4. ***Sit in Mindfulness***
one to three times a day
for ten to twenty minutes

Remember The Mindfulness Code
STOP - LOOK - LISTEN & BE HERE NOW

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Mindfulness Practice Schedule

(Photocopy as required)

WEEK

DAY	PRACTICE		COMMENTS - ie. no. of times / type / observations etc
MON	Morning	☐	
	1 minute	☐	
Date	Daily Life	☐	
	Sitting	☐	
TUE	Morning	☐	
	1 minute	☐	
Date	Daily Life	☐	
	Sitting	☐	
WED	Morning	☐	
	1 minute	☐	
Date	Daily Life	☐	
	Sitting	☐	
THU	Morning	☐	
	1 minute	☐	
Date	Daily Life	☐	
	Sitting	☐	
FRI	Morning	☐	
	1 minute	☐	
Date	Daily Life	☐	
	Sitting	☐	
SAT	Morning	☐	
	1 minute	☐	
Date	Daily Life	☐	
	Sitting	☐	
SUN	Morning	☐	
	1 minute	☐	
Date	Daily Life	☐	
	Sitting	☐	

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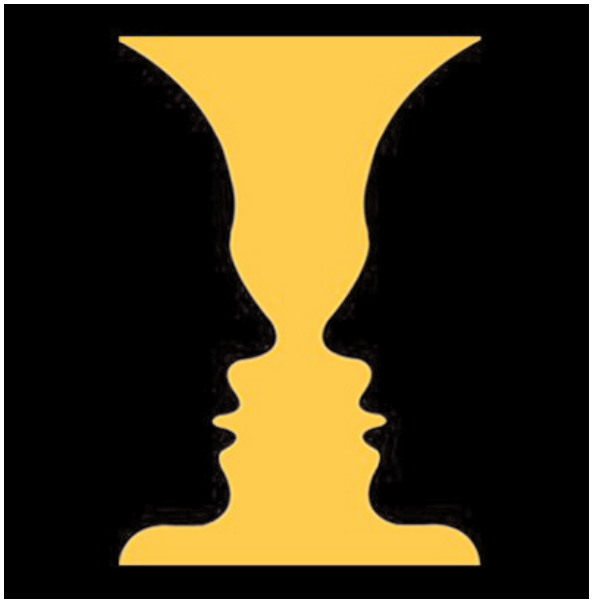
Taking it further

The practise of Self Enquiry



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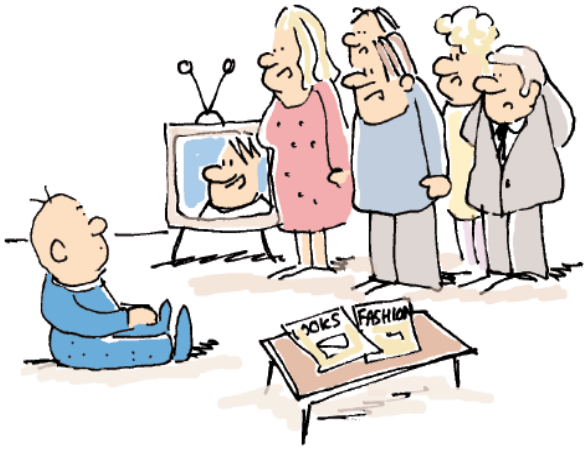
Insight through Self Enquiry

Mindfulness practice will naturally lead to increased insight in all aspects of your life. To begin with you see that many of your thoughts and behaviours are automatic and habitual.

With non judgemental self observation you may also discover how these thoughts and behaviours came about.

You may then see that many of your most deeply held beliefs, ideas, hopes, aspirations, and fears have been 'added' from outside - parents, teachers, peers, the media, government. Some of your beliefs may even only be as a result of wanting to do the *opposite* of what others were telling you to do.



Hello and welcome to Life..
Your name is .....
Your race is .....
Your Religion is .....
Your political preferences are ..
Your nationality is .....
The school we will send you to is ..
You must achieve .....
You can do ..... but don't ever do ..
We don't like people who .....
We only want what's best for you.
.Any questions?

Eventually you may wonder which beliefs or ideas - if any - are truly yours. This is when the practice of 'Self Enquiry' can be very useful.

The most traditional method for Self Enquiry is to contemplate the question "WHO AM I?"

As you ask yourself this question it is easier at first to contemplate who (or what) you are 'not'. The key is to remember that the question is more important than the answer. You won't neccessarily find an answer that you can write down, you may just get an 'intuitive' sense of who you 'are' that deepens the more you contemplate the question.

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Insight through Self Enquiry

Sit Mindfully for 5 or 10 minutes and then bring the question "Who Am I?" to mind. Below are some areas for exploration..

"Who am I?"

Am I this body?

This body is in a constant state of change - cells die and are then renewed each second - within 7 years my body will be completely renewed. My skin, nails, hair all grow and then fall away - do 'I' fall away too? If I lost a limb, am I then less who I am? My breath is part of my body - when I breath out do I lose a part of 'me'. The food I eat becomes my body - at what stage does an Apple or a Donut become 'me'? Which body am I - the child, the teenager, the adult, the corpse?

Am I my mind? I can observe my mind - I can improve my mind, fill it with new ideas - WHO is doing these things. I can even observe myself observing myself - why is this possible?

How do I define myself? By job, career, wealth, stature, looks, gender, religion, nationality? - If I got amnesia and forgot all my personal history who would I be then - would I be 'nobody'? Would I still have the same set of problems or goals?

Who am I in relation to the natural world from which I arise and without which I cannot even exist? In order to exist I need the energy from the Sun, gravity, food, water, the Earth, space.. - are these things separate from me - could I survive without them? Is this important?

Remember that the questions are just POINTERS to a deeper understanding of who you are. You don't need to find 'definitive' answers. Intuitively 'feel' what the questions are pointing at - then stay open to that feeling. Should your mind settle down then rest in the silence until your mind draws you in again.

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Some interesting facts about Meditation

The University of Cambridge found out that Insight Meditation halved the relapse ratio of chronically depressed patients

In the Dutch town of Lelystad there is an elementary school where the children Meditate twice a day for 10 minutes. The results are fantastic. The children get quieter and more stable, they achieve better in the national tests. (De Telegraaf, a Dutch daily)

Deepak Chopra estimates that people who Meditate for many years often have a biological age that is between 5 and 10 years lower than their chronological age.

Hormones with a calming effect like melatonin and serotin increase as a result of Meditating, whereas the stress hormone cortisol decreases.

Meditating has an immense positive effect on the three great indicators of ageing: our sense of hearing, our blood pressure and our eyesight.

Just before winning Wimbledon the famous tennis player Richard Krajicek read the Zen book "Nothing special" by Joko Beck four times. In this way he learned to let go of an error very soon and concentrate right away on the next ball.

In the U.S.A. 10 million people Meditate every day (Time Magazine)

Research has demonstrated that well trained meditators could not even be pulled out of their concentration by gunshots.

The University of Wisconsin discovered that employees that Meditated have a higher frustration tolerance, more joy in their work, a more cheerful and more optimistic attitude and higher energy levels. It is also clear that conflicts and unpleasant relationships among employees decrease when they start to Meditate.

In more and more airports you find special Meditation and contemplation centres.

People that Meditate recover more quickly from diseases and will not often experience situations as stressful.
Time Magazine

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Famous Meditators

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BOOKS

Present Moment Awareness
by Shannon Duncan
This great little book expands on all of the areas described in this booklet.
Easy to read. Great exercises.

Diamond Mind: *A Psychology of Meditation*
by Robert Nairn
Excellent, easy to follow book filled with golden nuggets of information and exercises

Everyday Zen *by Charlotte Joko Beck*
Every line in this book teaches you something invaluable. Could be re-read a million times.
Most western Mindfulness practitioners swear by this book.

Zen O'Clock: *Time to be by Scott Shaw*
A pocket book that will save your life if you're ever caught waiting in a queue or on a long journey.
Jolts you back into the here-and-now. Brilliant!

Wherever You Go There You Are
by Jon Kabat-Zinn
Excellent book that explores mindfulness techniques in short easily digestable chapters.

Full Catastrophy Living:
How to cope with stress, pain and illness using mindfulness meditation by Jon Kabat-Zinn
There is a lot in this but it is also a VERY big read (470 pages)

The Zen Path Through Depression
by Philip Martin
Succinct chapters dealing with various aspects of depression. Excellent meditation exercises

Awareness
by Anthony De Mello
I would rate this as one of the most inspiring and practical books I have ever read.

The Power of Now *by Eckhart Tolle*
Terrific book. Apparently Meg Ryan recommended it to Oprah Winfrey. There is a shortened version called Practising The Power of Now - if you don't like a big read.

Stop Thinking Start Living *by Richard Carlson*
Does exactly what it says on the cover. Great if endless thinking is your number one problem.

Mindful Recovery: *A Spiritual Path to Healing from Addiction* byThomas Bien & Beverly Bien
Excellent book combining mindfulness and psychology. This will help anyone suffering from ANY addiction - alcohol, shopping, relationships, sex, eating etc

WEBSITES

www.umassmed.edu/cfm/
Centre for Mindfulness (Jon Kabat-Zinn)

www.mindfulnesstapes.com/
Recordings by Jon Kabat-Zinn

www.abc-of-meditation.com

www.deeshan.com
Get the daily meditation tip/quote

www.springwatercenter.org
Check out Toni Packer's articles

www.bemindful.co.uk
(Mental Health Foundation - UK)

DVDs

Nothing Special - Joko Beck - available from www.willkefilm.de

AUDIOBOOKS

Available from www.audible.co.uk
or www.soundstrue.com
Pure Meditation - Pema Chodron
Living Everyday Zen - Joko Beck - 3 CDs

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